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FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2444
INFO RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA PRIORITY 8877
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 5762
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU PRIORITY 3796
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 2810
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RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO PRIORITY 2922
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY 0738
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 1995
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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [CE](#)
SUBJECT: SRI LANKA: LTTE AND GOVERNMENT AGREE OF VENUE FOR
TALKS.

REF: COLOMBO 0137

¶1. (U) Summary: On January 25, the Government of Sri Lanka (GSL) and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) agreed to hold talks on implementation of the Cease-Fire Agreement (CFA) in Geneva, Switzerland in February, according to various sources. No specific dates or modalities have been revealed. Norwegian Minister for International Development and Special Envoy Erik Solheim is expected in Colombo to brief President Mahinda Rajapaksa followed by a meeting with co-chair Ambassadors which Ambassador Lunstead will attend. This news must be tempered by how both parties will approach the substance of the negotiations. End Summary.

¶2. (U) According to the LTTE mouthpiece Tamilnet.com and confirmed by Sri Lankan Peace Secretariat Policy Director Shanaka Jayasekara, the LTTE has agreed to meet with the GSL for talks on strengthening the CFA in Geneva at an unspecified date in February. The topic of discussion will be how to implement the crumbling 2002 CFA. According to Jayasekara, they are awaiting Special Envoy Solhiem's return to Colombo on January 25 at 1700 local time to brief the President regarding the modalities surrounding the future talks. Ambassador Lunstead is scheduled to meet with Solheim and the other co-chairs the evening of January 25. Coverage on Tamilnet included the comment by LTTE chief negotiator and strategist Anton Balasingham that talks on further matters could only take place after a complete cessation of the military's oppression of the Tamil people.

¶3. (SBU) COMMENT: This is a positive step forward to restoring the CFA. However, so much attention has been placed on the venue, that the real substance of the talks, likely to include disarming the Tamil paramilitaries and an end to Tiger attacks, will be thorny indeed. END COMMENT
LUNSTEAD